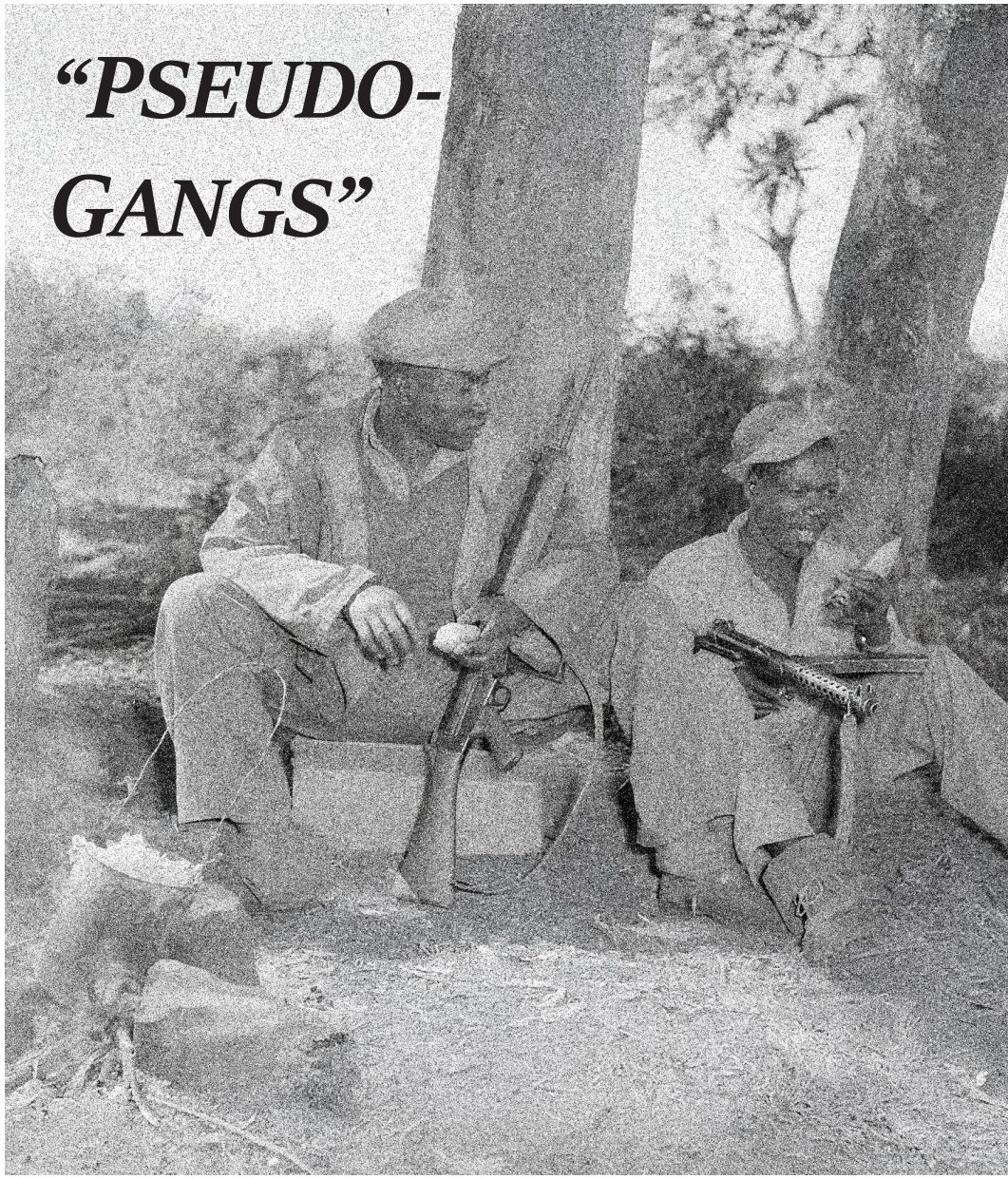
Then an even greater conceptual breakthrough came to the imperialist security forces. Instead of merely lurking on the edges of the Movement, why couldn't they *become* the Movement?



by J. Sakai

is when the "pseudo-gangs" *become* the movement, organizing a pseudo-movement of underground community committees, new recruits, etc., all out of honest supporters of the revolution. So that an entire pseudo-movement exists (in competition with the original movement) which looks authentic, is mostly made up of honest elements, but which conceals at its heart the imperialist security forces. In such a process the security forces *create* movement leaders—of their own. This has certain implications, particularly in the more sophisticated "encapsulated-gang" tactics.

In Kenya the security forces had recruited two minor guerrilla officers, Gati and Hungu. Both had taken an active role in a faction fight wherein they and other opportunists had tried to divide the Armies along the lines of illiterate vs. literate. They were both opposed to the existing commanders (who could read and write) and sought to whip up resentment among the fighters against those who could read. If they took over, Gati, Hungu and their friends had hoped to make a deal with the British Army. Instead, these two went over to the authorities alone.

The security forces quickly promoted them as "leaders." The authorities offered big rewards for their capture, put them on the "most wanted" list, said that they had shot down police, and in every way gave them a "revolutionary" image. Then, backed up by "pseudo-gangs," Gati and Hungu were reinserted into the guerrillas to become major revolutionary leaders, to undermine the already-difficult efforts of the real leadership. Once such a pseudo-movement operation gains entry into the struggle it can have strategic consequences.

alists as "pseudos." This is the lightest of smokescreens, since it is obvious that a close imperialist colleague of top Pentagon and CIA officials doesn't depend upon "rumors" allegedly heard by a pacifist college professor to know about U.S. counter-insurgency operations. It is interesting that a leading U.S. counter-insurgency official was pushing Gen. Kitson's "pseudo-gang" theories. Perhaps the experience of Kenya has practical application for us today.

"Pseudo-Gangs" In Perspective

"Pseudo-gangs" are not invincible weapons, but like all imperialist tactics are effective within certain strategic constraints. In Kenya the strategic situation favored their use. There the movement was ideologically underdeveloped, and, after the first blows, without effective overall leadership. The fighters were increasingly disunited as the war progressed—both politically and organizationally—and were broken up into small, isolated, self-governing collectives or units. This describes a near-ideal situation for "pseudo-gang" tactics to penetrate and spread.

In Vietnam, which is almost the polar opposite in terms of strong communist leadership and strategic unity, similar imperialist tactics got absolutely nowhere. "Turned" Vietnamese guerrillas, such as the "Kit Carson Scouts" attempted by the U.S. Marines, were useless as a whole. Even Gen. Frank Kitson, the best-known practitioner of "pseudo-gangs," was unable to advance one inch with his expertise against the Irish Republican Army. Sent to Belfast with elite British troops, Gen. Kitson predicted that they would completely eliminate the IRA and finish the war—by 1975. The IRA is still laughing.

Of course, there is no iron wall between strategic situation and tactics. One influences the other, and vice-versa. There is at least one hypothetical framework in which "pseudo-gang" tactics can have major strategic consequences. This

"Pseudo-Gangs" (S1, 1983)

In war both sides must try to carry out bold plans. The imperialists as well as the guerrillas build with elements of surprise and deception. This is one part of gaining the initiative, life and death in military matters.

On the tactical level we can see this in the heavy imperialist use of "pseudo-gangs" in counter-insurgency. "Pseudo-gangs" are small units of captured or surrendered guerrillas, who are "turned" by the imperialists and sent back into the underground to pretend at still being revolutionaries. The "pseudo-gang" sets up assassinations and traps, causes confusions, and also provides an ongoing depth of intelligence to the imperialists. It was during the "Mau Mau" rebellion of 1952–56 in Kenya that the imperialist security forces first promoted this tactic in a major way.* The leading imperialist theorist on "pseudo-gang" tactics, now-famous Brigadier General Frank Kitson of the British Army, learned his trade as a young officer in Kenya.

* The term "Mau Mau," which has disputed origins, was invented and popularized by the British authorities. The Kenyan people back then never used this term, and usually called their uprising simply "The Movement." The organized fighters were named the Land & Freedom Armies.

Insurgency In Kenya

The background of the 1952–56 Kenya revolution shows the development of "pseudo-gangs" as one integral part of the whole imperialist counter-insurgency. The uprising was primarily based among the "KEM" peoples (Kikuyu and the related Embu and Meru peoples) in the Central Province. At the time of the uprising they numbered one-third of the Afrikan population of Kenya. These 1½ million Afrikans in the Central Province had borne the worst of the colonial oppression. By the eve of the revolution the Kikuyu were increasingly landless, a million people pent up on 2,000 square miles of tribal reservations (called the Reserves by the British) while the 30,000 European settlers directly occupied 12,000 square miles of the best farmlands.

Afrikan workers earned an average wage of $73 per year, including food and housing. The contract laborers on the settler plantations were paid with a few coins each month and being allowed to raise their own food on a 1½ acre plot. In return each Afrikan family signed a three-year contract obliging the entire family, including children, to give the settlers 270 days of work each year. No Afrikan could leave their area or be absent from the plantation overnight without his "master's" permission. For landless Kikuyu real income had fallen by 30–40% during the fifty-year colonial period. By 1950 the Afrikan living standards in Kenya were going down rapidly as war-torn Britain needed more and more capital to reindustrialize (just like in the U.S. Empire today).

The anti-colonial revolution in Kenya was a mass uprising by the hungry and oppressed. The goal was "Land and Freedom," national liberation and the ouster of the European settlers. Two events had also precipitated the uprising. One was the refusal of the new "socialist" Labour Party government in England to grant independence to the Afrikan colonies. This ended the faint hopes that the colonial system could be nonviolently reformed or that "friends" in Britain would give freedom to Afrikans.

was officially an obscure military attache, but in reality was the secret commander of all CIA military operations in the Far East. In that role, in 1952 Stilwell organized the last U.S. invasion of China—the disastrous offensive by Gen. Li Mi's 10,000-man puppet Kuomintang army across the Burma-China border.

According to the *N.Y. Times,* May 11, 1983, Gen. Stilwell was the "prime mover" in the creation of the Army Intelligence Support Activity, a new, secret counter-insurgency force that helped rescue U.S. Gen. Dozier from the Red Brigades in Italy, and is active now in El Salvador and Nicaragua (and elsewhere). The *N.Y. Times* says of Gen. Kitson's Amerikan colleague: "Now retired, General Stilwell is the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and, in that capacity, plays a leading role in intelligence, counterintelligence and security policies." It is clear, then, that Gen. Kitson is close to the highest levels of the U.S. counter-insurgency command, and writes of it with certain knowledge.

This is important to ascertain, because one of the noticeable cover-ups in Gen. Kitson's study relates to the U.S. He wrote: **"A more elaborate operation might involve the building up of a pseudo-gang from captured insurgents and the cultivation by them of a local supporters' committee in a particular area ... There is some evidence to the effect that pseudo-gangs of ultra-militant black nationalists are operating now in the United States."**

While Gen. Kitson obviously believed that only his fellow security officers would read this revealing comment, he properly had to formally deny that this information was officially leaked from his Pentagon colleagues (such as Gen. Stilwell). So Gen. Kitson's study says that his source of information on that was a book by a white pacifist professor in Philadelphia. This Euro-Amerikan professor, who is a former Civil Rights supporter and an advocate of nonviolent integrationism, claims in one line of a book that he had heard unspecified "rumors" discrediting some unknown armed Black nation-

British Army officers. Since this study was technical and written only for a military readership, neither Kitson nor his superiors expected it to attract any public attention. To their regret, it did.

Gen Kitson's tendency toward boldness put the Army in an awkward position, because the special usefulness of his study was that it discussed these matters in a relatively open way. So that Gen. Kitson recommended that the British Army be engaged in peacetime to use counter-insurgency tactics against the British trade unions and other reform movements at home! Further, he also recommended that Army counter-insurgency officers be integrated into all civilian decision-making on social problems, from the local town level on up.

This wouldn't pose any political problems, Gen. Kitson wrote, since it would be kept secret from the British public. Once this all-too-revealing study was discovered by the British Labour Party, there was a very embarrassing furor over it in Parliament and the media.

While Gen. Kitson's study was too honest and too publicized for the imperialists, there is no doubt that it represented the official thinking of the imperialist security forces on both sides of the Atlantic. The "Introduction" in this book is by Gen. Sir Michael Carver, as Chief of the British Imperial General Staff. This high-level endorsement is continued in the study's "Foreword," which is by U.S. Army Gen. Richard Stilwell. This is more interesting than it appears.

Gen. Kitson's admiring colleague, U.S. Gen. Richard Stilwell, is identified in the book as U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff. This is a high ranking connection, indeed. But the U.S. Army's Gen. Stilwell is much more than that. He is the most important counter-insurgency planner and administrator in the Pentagon. In 1964–65 Stilwell was Chief of Staff (MACV) for all U.S. forces occupying Vietnam. After that he was head of the CIA counter-insurgency effort in Thailand. Gen. Stilwell's entire career has been linked to covert counter-insurgency operations. In the 1950s we know that he

The second event was an attack against Afrikan children. The Beecher Report plan (named after its missionary author) was being imposed despite universal Afrikan protests. Under this 75% of all Afrikan school children were to be forced out of school after the 4th grade. Another 18% would leave school after the 6th grade. This would have ensured the settlers a continued reserve army of semi-educated Afrikan child labor. This scheme stirred up deep anger among the masses, who had made great sacrifices to give their children what little education was available to them. The feelings were so strong that during the war Afrikan schoolmasters who followed the government plan were targets of assassination. While the imperialist propaganda pictured the guerrillas as "blood-thirsty savages" running wild, we can better understand the heart of the Kikuyu fighters by one of the popular songs they sung in the forest:

"Neither your unsatisfied wants
Nor your difficulties will kill you.
Without eyes to see the tears of the children
It matters not whether one is foolish or clever.

"If Mumbi's children are not educated
Then neither the European
Nor the Asian will lose sleep
Worrying about how to satisfy their needs.*

"This is a time for sharing. Kikuyus arise!
Let us help the children with their difficulties
For they are the ones who will take our places.

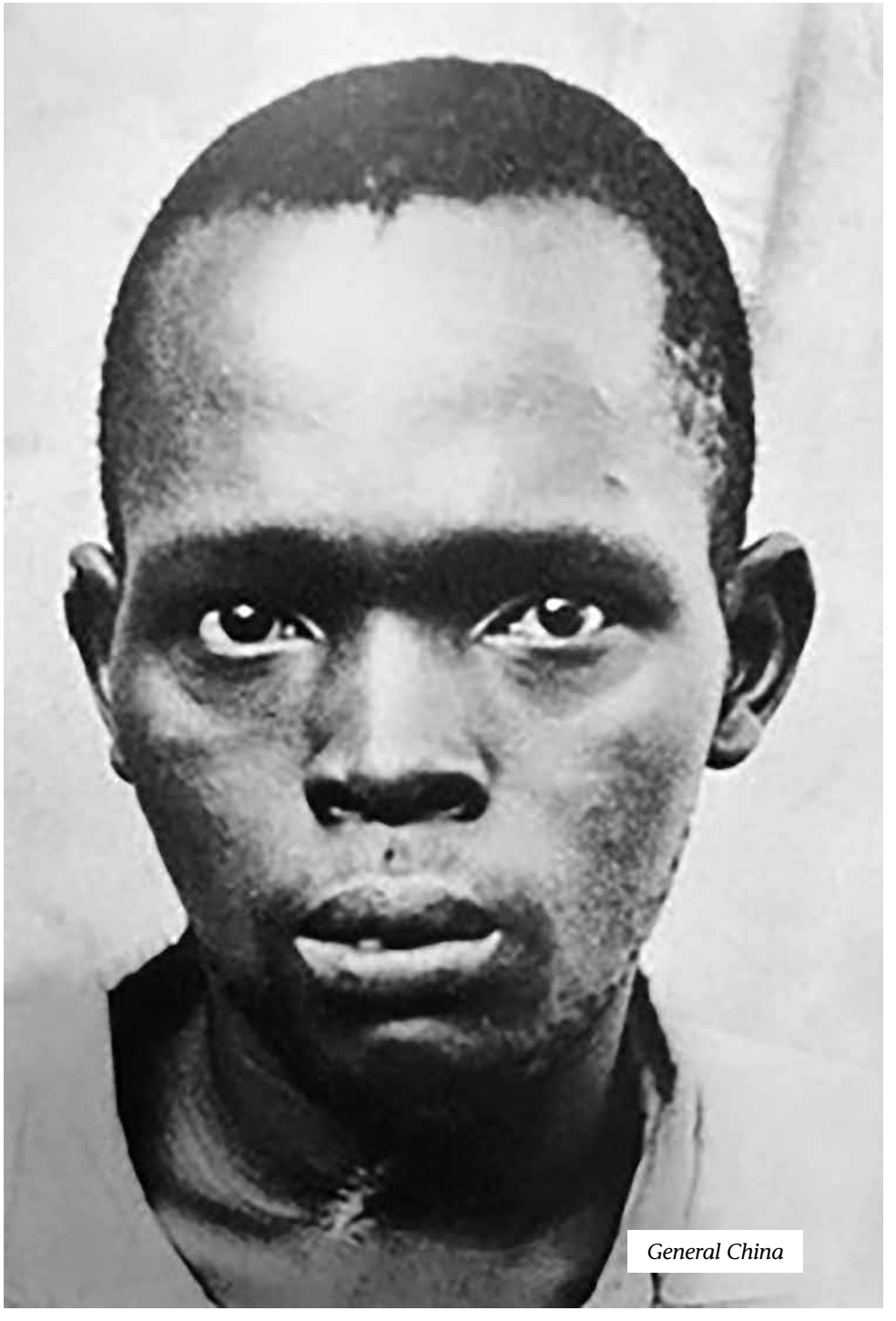
"The need for a spear is gone
Replaced by the need for a pen.
For our enemies today
Fight with words …"

* Gikuyu and Mumbi were the legendary father and mother, the founding parents, of the Kikuyu peoples.

The armed struggle had great mass support, perhaps close to the highest degree that could be imagined. This was necessary since the fighters had very little in the way of modern weapons or political/military preparation. At peak strength the great majority of the guerrillas had only simis, the traditional Kikuyu sword. The homemade guns constructed from half- and three-quarter-inch waterpipe and the sprinkling of "precision" (as they were called) rifles, pistols, and shotguns bought on the black market or seized in attacks equipped only some 20% of the guerrillas. Ammunition was initially so scarce that the Kikuyu women forced into prostitution by colonialism secretly charged puppet troops one bullet each; this slender supply being one necessary source for the new Land & Freedom Armies.

There were almost 20,000 fighters. This was a very large number, considering the Kikuyu population of under 1½ million. By official British estimates 90% of the Kikuyu actively supported the struggle. When the Movement called upon Kikuyu to boycott the Nairobi bus system, to give up frequenting Asian cafes, and to stop using European beer and cigarettes, the masses responded. The underground Movement was so all-pervasive that the puppet Kikuyu Home Guards were at first heavily infiltrated. General Kitson accidentally reveals this in describing a late-night "native" dance he attended:

> "The assembled company represented a pretty fair cross-section of the sort of Afrikans with whom we did business. All our own men were there … three or four tribal policemen were happily drinking away with the Afrikan foreman of a big European farm. This man was a great personality in the area, a pillar of the Christian Church and leader of an enthusiastic band of Kikuyu Guard. Four months later we discovered that he was also a member of the Mau Mau Central Committee …"



General China

could do all this better with you and be more comfortable at the same time.'"

The Afrikan revolutionary forces were aware of potential problems from these unreliable types, but in the political disorganization were unable to firmly deal with it. The Movement called these lumpen "Komerera," a Kikuyu word for "criminals in hiding." They were a problem to the Land and Freedom Armies, particularly when military pressure forced fighters into autonomous, smaller units. Komerera were always straying off from the main Armies, trying to escape political discipline, and often interested in raiding the closest Afrikan farms for food, women, and money so that they could lay up in the forest. While the Armies tried to find and redraft komerera back into the regular fighting ranks, this only preserved outward unity while also preserving the contradictions. These problems infected whole Armies eventually.

It was a mark of Gen. Kitson's professionalism that even as a young captain, fresh from England, he was able to understand the opportunity that the komerera gave him. Kitson didn't let his bigotry (his team spoke of "taming" Afrikans) blind him to the possibility of winning over and using unknown Afrikan guerrillas to penetrate back into the heart of the rebellion. His "pseudo-gang" system in Kenya earned him medals and a swift promotion to Major. From Kenya he went to Malaya (building "pseudo-gangs" there as well) to the Middle East with the UN peace-keeping forces, and on to General's rank and a place as one of imperialism's top counter-insurgency commanders.

The Rand Corp. (the major U.S. Defense Department "think tank") recognized Kitson's role as a counter-insurgency theorist by inviting him to be one of the participants in their 1962 counter-insurgency planning conference (to prepare for Vietnam). His reputation was crowned by the publication in 1971 of *Low-Intensity Operations,* a theoretical study for the Imperial General Staff and a semi-official primer for

In the first year of military struggle, starting in the Winter of 1952–53, guerrillas were in the ascendancy—assassinating puppet officials, capturing police posts, and forcing the British Army units back out of the forests. This initial success proved the potential of Afrikan power, but it was also somewhat misleading. While the revolutionary zeal of the people was high, there were important contradictions within the nationalist movement.

The nationalist movement was divided into two political tendencies. One was headed by Jomo Kenyatta, beyond any doubt the main independence leader and hero to the Kikuyu peoples. Kenyatta was the leading representative of his class, the European-educated Afrikan petty bourgeoisie. Their program was parliamentary democracy for Afrikans, which meant civil rights, equality with settlers in business and land ownership, and eventually an Afrikan majority government. To do this Kenyatta and his associates had led their banned Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) in the 1940s to begin a secret campaign of oathing—of having each Kikuyu take a sacred oath to regain their land and freedom.

By 1952 the KCA, although in theory legally banned by the colonial authorities, was conducting mass rallies of 20,000 to 30,000 Kikuyu, with the black, red, and green Afrikan flag waving from the speaker's platform. Jomo Kenyatta's strategy was to slowly build momentum toward campaigns of mass civil disobedience, just as Gandhi had done in India, to nonviolently urge the British out. As a legal, mass united front the KCA had organized the Kenyan African Union, which embraced all the other Afrikan peoples as well. This was the public movement that most Afrikans and most Europeans knew of.

But within this nationalist stirring there was another more secret organization, which became the actual leading nucleus of the uprising. This was a revolutionary political tendency, centered in the Afrikan proletariat and set upon the course of armed struggle. On May 16, 1950, the Afrikan

and Asian workers in Nairobi (the colony's capital) began a nine-day general strike, which stopped all economic activity in the city. The 100,000 strikers were protesting the British repression against their new nationalist unions (which had openly demanded independence). The strike spread to Mombasa and elsewhere. Using troops and mass arrests the British finally crushed the political general strike.

This set-back was not unexpected, and only consolidated the resolve of the Afrikan working-class leadership to organize armed struggle for liberation.

While the new underground conspiracy included Kikuyu from almost all classes in Nairobi, from peddlars and unemployed youth and street criminals to small merchants, it was primarily the workers in two unions, the transport workers and the domestic and hotel workers.* In June 1951 the young revolutionaries took over the large Nairobi chapter of the moderate Kenya African Union (KAU). Within the next year they would secretly win over control of the KAU local committees in much of central Kenya, unable to fully take over the KAU National Executive because of Jomo Kenyatta's great prestige.

In the Summer of 1951 the revolutionaries established their clandestine Central Committee as the supreme leadership of the rapidly growing network of underground cells. Small armed teams were started to provide security and eliminate informers. The Central Committee took Jomo Kenyatta's oathing campaign, which had been going on with rising response, and raised it to a new level with the "Warrior's Oath." This new, second oath ceremony secretly pledged one to join the armed struggle as a fighter and was administered on a surprise basis. Once a Kikuyu was honored by being invited to take the "Warrior's Oath," he had to either do so on the spot or be immediately executed. It was a

* Unlike the AFL-CIO–type imperialist unions, these nationalist Afrikan unions were highly militant associations led by political workers.

Actually very few Kenyan guerrillas betrayed their revolution. At their largest, in June 1956, the "pseudo-gangs" involved only ninety traitors out of over 15,000 forest guerrillas. In every struggle we have always seen some who "turned" out of weakness or ambition. This was true in China, Mozambique, and Vietnam as well. Even in defeat and when confronted with execution, Afrikan guerrillas (most of them teenage youth) remained true to their people and their revolution.

"Pseudo-gang" traitors were carefully hand-picked by the security forces. Gen. Kitson learned from experience that guerrillas with patriotic convictions were resistant to his scheme: "… it was best to rule out people who had joined Mau Mau because they were fanatically keen on the movement politically." What Gen. Kitson looked for were Afrikans who had the same mentality that he himself had. These he could trust. As he put it:

> "By far the best were the Africans who joined the gangs from a spirit of adventure … Tired of their drab lives on farms or in the Reserves, they thought that it would be fun to be a gangster and carry a pistol and kill their acquaintances. Their outlook was not far from that of many young men of spirit anywhere else in the world and they were the easiest to handle because they were the easiest to satisfy."

Gen. Kitson once asked an Afrikan traitor who had become a "pseudo-gang" leader about George, the very first of them:

> "'I know why you joined our organization,' I said, 'but what about George?'
>
> "'George is different,' he answered. 'George does not mind about the Mau Mau or the Government and he certainly does not care who wins. George just likes excitement. He wants to walk around with a pistol and get plenty of loot. He changed sides because he

By the war's end, in 1956, roughly half of the last several hundred guerrillas holding out were actually "pseudo-gangs." Having started as straight hunter-killer teams using disguise to get within killing range of guerrillas, the "pseudos" finally evolved into a complex, fulltime pseudo-movement. The settler police officer who ran the pseudo-movement recalls:

> "The task of keeping every man in our force recognizably active, that is to say acceptable to the remnant hostile gangs as comrades-in-arms, was extraordinarily difficult, and as much work and time had to be devoted to this extremely important aspect of our technique as was devoted to the actual hunting of Mau Mau. We had to get all our teams seen in the forest from time to time; we had to get their members to write letters and keep up the chain of correspondence in the jungle; we had to keep their food stores going. You could not remove half the Mau Mau from the forest and expect the subsequent absence of hideouts, letters, traps and many other signs of Mau Mau activity to pass unnoticed by the other half.
>
> "Often we were able to arrange meetings in the forest where our teams would confer with hostile Mau Mau. Having proved their loyalty to the cause and extracted all the information they possibly could without giving the game away, our men would withdraw … and the way would be paved for more operations."

The question naturally arises of who these "turned" guerrillas were, and how did the imperialists twist them around? The security forces love to play up "turned" revolutionaries, implying that they can always intimidate or buy many freedom fighters. This contemptuous propaganda is very deliberate, since they know that this degrades the image of the liberation struggle. Such propaganda blows can be even more damaging than temporary defeat itself.

selective national draft. This then was the armed movement that the British called "Mau Mau," a nationalist movement initially led by the young Afrikan proletariat.

Armed propaganda had started, most particularly in assassinations of prominent Kikuyu puppets. All this placed Jomo Kenyatta and the Afrikan intelligentsia in a difficult position. The British enforced collective punishment (seizure of livestock, etc.) on Kikuyu villages where armed propaganda had been most visible. Kenyatta had been warned by the colonial authorities to join the puppet chiefs in attacking the "Mau Mau" terrorism—or else. In the Summer of 1952 Kenyatta and his petty bourgeois group of KCA leaders began publicly denouncing the "Mau Mau" guerrillas at large rallies. This was a serious crisis, since Kenyatta was the beloved hero of the Kikuyu peoples, and even most fighters thought of him as their ultimate leader.

The Central Committee decided to try and hold together the political tendencies by coopting Kenyatta as the figurehead of their revolution. In a secret meeting Kenyatta was introduced to the Central Committee; to his surprise he found out not only that most were working-class leaders in "his" organization, but that the illegal Central Committee had drafted him as a member. Although angry, Kenyatta went along. His disagreement with the armed struggle was so evident, however, that his execution as a traitor was discussed later. Kenyatta's arrest and removal from Kenya by the British saved him, and preserved his public position as the No. 1 leader of the independence struggle.

This is a sharp example of the incomplete political consolidation of the Movement. In fact, Kenyatta's own class did not fully participate in the Revolution (although they became its main beneficiaries). The British-educated Afrikan petty bourgeoisie, while of course desiring civil rights and later independence, was in the main loyal to British imperialism. They clung to their precarious positions as minor officials, as clerks and schoolteachers. Those petty bourgeois who did give support to the revolution did so primarily for

tactical reasons, to save themselves from reprisals and keep a foot in both camps.

This had a strategic effect upon the struggle. There were almost no intellectuals among the over 15,000 fighters in the main Land & Freedom Armies in the forest; the most educated person among them had two years of high school. This mass guerrilla struggle was poorly armed politically, with no revolutionary science available to the fighters. The revolution as a whole was not socialist. While there had been a few socialists among the Nairobi unions, they were among the first arrested. Without revolutionary science, without the advances and lessons that had been won in the revolutions of many nations, the Kikuyu movement could make only the most improvised and spontaneous plans. This was decisive in their defeat, outmaneuvered both politically and militarily by imperialism.

Events reached a turning point with the assassination of Chief Waruhiu on October 6, 1952. He had been one of the highest ranking puppets. That night spontaneous beer parties were held all over Central Province in celebration.

Imperialist authority had been so clearly undermined that the British declared a State of Emergency and began wide-scale repression. Local underground committees fought back, thousands of young men fled to the forests, and the war had been fully joined.

The nationalist underground was reorganized starting in January 1953 to wartime roles. There were two sectors, the Passive Wing of support committees (buying arms, supplying food, etc.) and the Active Wing comprising the seven Land and Freedom Armies. Hope was bright in Afrikan eyes. The revolt was spreading, including to the Kamba (who were 12% of the Afrikan peoples). This was especially significant, as Kamba recruits were used by the imperialists as a main element in the puppet police and military. The Movement was so widespread, almost universal, that its activities seemed unstoppable. Afrikans expected an intense but short war, in which their numerical advantage of 100-to-1 over the settlers

> team to meet them pretending to be visitors from Nairobi or emissaries from the forest. Whatever the story the local Mau Mau committee received them courteously and promised to arrange a meeting with the gang. But a meeting never took place.
>
> "Eventually the Military Intelligence Officer for Thika District devised a long-term plan. Near to the area in which the gang operated were a number of farms which had no Mau Mau committee on them because they'd all been arrested some months earlier. He decided to introduce a pseudo-gang who would tell the laborers that they had been forced out of their normal area in Kiambu. Our gang would ask for support and encourage the formation of the normal chain of committees to provide it. Once the system was operating freely he would arrest all the supporters of the real gang from the other group of farms. He hoped that the real gang would be forced into getting supplies from the committees which he had set up to support our pseudo-gang. Our gang would then be well within their rights to demand a meeting with the terrorists in order to co-ordinate operations."

This plan worked perfectly, with the "pseudo-gang" organizing a whole network of secret support committees among the Afrikan laborers. Soon the real guerrillas, now convinced of the "pseudo-gang's" authenticity, agreed to meet with the "pseudo-gang," and were wiped out in a police ambush. The imperialist security forces were very pleased by this "immense success." Secret "pseudo-gang" operations were set up by a new police Special Forces command in each district. These "pseudo-gangs" built their own base of support, becoming "warrior's oath" administrators and recruiting eager Afrikan youth straight into their contaminated pseudo-movement. This positively confirmed who was disloyal and neutralized them while using them as a front to kill the revolution.

Didan Kimathi

would inevitably bring them victory. One Land and Freedom Army commander recalls:

> "We had to defeat the Europeans, I continued to reason. There were 60,000 Europeans against six million Africans. Each European had to fight againt 100 Africans. It did not matter if he killed half of them and finally be killed himself, making sure that the survivors would share the land that had been used by the European, cast down the colonial rule and form an African government …
>
> "My knowledge had been swept together with the thousands of ignorant warriors whose focus was only the Kenya settlers. I had ignored the fact that the colonial system from United Kingdom was the source of our exploitation which we were determined to eliminate."

Counter-Insurgency in Kenya

British imperialism gradually assembled a military force of over 50,000 troops. There was the Kenya Regiment of local settlers and some elite British infantry battalions, but the total of European police and soldiers was not large. Most of the imperialist forces were puppet Afrikan troops. There were six battalions of Kings African Rifles (regular colonial infantry), local Home Guards and thousands of Turkana and Somali tribal police brought in from other British colonies.

Weakened by World War II, and also fighting in wars in the Middle East, Korea, and Malaysia, British imperialism could not afford to assemble any overpowering concentration of strength. In spite of their useless handful of old armored cars, cannon and World War II bombers, the technological gap between the imperialists and the revolutionary fighters was not qualitatively significant. In the forested mountainside or Nairobi slum street a grenade, a shotgun, or even

a simi in the hands of a guerrilla was more potent than a British tank.

Imperialism's advantage in the war was a matter of professional strategy and modern organization; with these imperialism regained the strategic initiative. While there have been several books written by British officers implying that "pseudo-gangs" and Afrikan guerrillas "turning" defeated the uprising, this is not true. "Pseudo-gangs" were not primary in counter-insurgency, but only secondary. Their tactical importance in some situations can only be evaluated by first understanding the overall situation of counter-insurgency.

Imperialist counter-insurgency operations exposed the urban revolutionary infrastructure and destroyed the organized political leadership. This was the key step. The British security forces had the advantage of wielding a well-practiced level of violence that Afrikans didn't anticipate. Few oppressed peoples, even the revolutionaries, believe that imperialism really will apply massive repression overnight. This unwillingness to face the impending destruction of "normal" life allows imperialist security forces to so often get in the decisive blows early.

In October 1952 the British began "Operation Jock Scott," a preemptive campaign of arresting the nationalist leaders to forestall the armed struggle. Within a month some 8,000 Afrikans and been arrested, moderate and revolutionary alike—Jomo Kenyatta was among the first and most prominent of the detainees. The entire Central Committee was arrested. This first blow damaged, but did not completely cripple the Movement. A new Central Committee was formed, and the liberation war was fully launched. So unsuccessful were the imperialists at first that an inspecting British Parliamentary Delegation reported critically in January 1954:

> "… the influence of Mau Mau in the Kikuyu area, except in certain localities, has not declined; it has,

> making up a suitable story each time to account for George's presence. On one occasion a contact made in this way told George that a supply group from his gang was lying up nearby. George went and met them and led them back to where we lay in wait so that we … killed or captured all the members of this group. We had in fact done something far more important than that: we had at last broken through the great divide …"

Soon it became too difficult for George to explain why he was always alone. To be more convincing, he coached eight puppet Afrikan police how to impersonate guerrillas. Suitably dressed and armed with simis and home-made guns, these men pretended to be the rest of his unit, staying in the background while George did the talking. This was the first "pseudo-gang" in Kenya. At first the "pseudo-gangs" were direct death-squad Phoenix-type units, setting up guerrillas for army traps, or, if they could lull them into letting down their guard, shooting down their newly-met "brothers." New traitors were recruited so that the "pseudo-gang" members would all be experienced forest "veterans,'' known and trusted. Intelligence-gathering quickly became an equal function, and often some guerrillas were left unharmed by the "pseudo-gang" if they seemed to be a good source of news about the revolutionary Armies further away.

Then an even greater conceptual breakthrough came to the imperialist security forces. Instead of merely lurking on the edges of the Movement, why couldn't they *become* the Movement? Gen. Kitson says that it began with the problem of a very efficient guerrilla unit in Thika District, which had corrected some seventy puppets in the previous six months:

> "The main reason for the survival of these terrorists was that we had been unable to make contact with our pseudo-gang. We knew who the terrorists' supporters were and we sent various members of our

awkward European troops crashing through the forest. After a whole month of intensive forest operations the imperialists had netted only 161 guerrillas killed or taken prisoner. It was in these circumstances that the "pseudo-gang" tactic (the British called the Kikuyu guerrilla units "gangs" to deny their political character) came into the foreground.

It all began in March 1954 with the capture of a single Afrikan guerrilla known to us only as "George." During long interrogation Gen. Kitson (then a captain in army intelligence) persuaded George to "turn." As Kitson tells it:

> "After completing the interrogation we took George out on a patrol and he pointed out several huts near the forest edge where his gang used to go for supplies. He went into one pretending to still be in the gang and the owner gave him some interesting bits of news. Over the next few days we did the same thing in other areas where George's gang was known to work,

Operation Anvil

> on the contrary, increased … In Nairobi, which is one of the most important centres in Africa, the situation is both grave and acute. Mau Mau orders are carried out in the heart of the city, Mau Mau 'courts' sit in judgment and their sentences are carried out by gangsters.''

So the Movement not only survived in the forested mountains but right in the colonial capital. It was, in fact, in the city where the political organization was the best developed. In Nairobi the underground center obtained arms, ammunition, medical supplies and food for the forest guerrillas, while also waging urban guerrilla warfare and recruiting new fighters for the growing forest armies.

Although the local settlers and the visiting British politicians were worried that "Mau Mau" had the military initiative, in part this was because the colonial authorities were buying time; major preparations, including the training of thousands of new puppet police, were underway for strategic counter-blows against the rebellion.

On April 24, 1954, an army of 25,000 imperialist soldiers and police suddenly cordoned off all the Afrikan areas of Nairobi. This was "Operation Anvil." Sweeping each street and building, the security forces herded the entire 100,000 person Afrikan population before them into a large field, where they were held and individually screened. 15,000 Afrikans were then detained in concentration camps, including all suspected nationalists and even all known union members. Relatives of the detainees were forced to leave Nairobi. The entire new Central Committee was arrested, and the underground was effectively hamstrung by this operation. At one stroke the political leadership of the revolution was removed and the major center of organization smashed.

Parallel operations took place in other urban areas. In the White Highlands (the settler plantation districts) over 100,000 Kikuyu were forcibly uprooted and expelled. General terror was used, since the imperialists had correctly concluded that

the entire Kikuyu peoples were against them. Some 77,000 Afrikans were eventually detained in the coming months in concentration camps. Torture was casually and commonly administered. Prisoners were subject to severe beatings, rape, castration, and other mutilation. Over 1,000 Afrikans were officially tried in colonial courts and executed (in contrast, the British had executed only eight of Begin's fascist-Zionist terrorists in Palestine).

It was in the countryside that the imperialists next demonstrated the effectiveness of massive force against the unprepared. In June 1954 the "villagization program" took hold, forcibly uprooting over 1 million Kikuyu in the tribal reservations. The entire Kikuyu population was forced to move into new guarded compounds, under close confinement by the police Their subsistence farming was disrupted, livestock lost. Both men and women had to spend much of their time on unpaid, forced labor gangs, cutting down brush and doing military construction. This deliberately lowered food production below the minimum for survival, so that no surplus foods existed to supply the forest Land and Freedom Armies. Thousands of Kikuyu children and aged died from starvation and disease.

Puppet troops were encouraged to victimize the general Kikuyu population at will, robbing homes, seizing livestock, beating and abusing women. Thousands and thousands of Afrikans were shot down or hacked apart by puppet troops and local settlers, with the uncounted bodies simpiy being thrown away. The British claim to have killed 11,503 guerrillas during combat, but the total of Afrikans killed has often been estimated as high as 50,000.

These strategic counter-blows effectively defeated the 1952–56 revolution. The Land and Freedom Armies were still thousands strong, but were cut off from both political leadership and from their base of support among the masses. In the heavily forested mountainsides of the Aberdale and Mt. Kenya areas the guerrillas could temporarily evade the security forces, but were unable to replace their losses or

resupply themselves. They had lost the strategic initiative. Efforts were made to recreate political structures in the forests with new mass patriotic organizations and new leadership bodies such as the Kenya Parliament. In the growing confusion these could not work. Guerrilla armies were suspicious and independent of each other; under the tightening imperialist pressure these too kept breaking down for survival into smaller and smaller autonomous units. The capture in October 1956 of Dedan Kimathi, the leading military commander and one of the last of the guerrilla hardcore, marked the final end of the revolution.

The revolution of 1952–56, even in defeat, profoundly shook up and changed East Afrika. Local European settlers proved unable without major reinforcements to hold down the Afrikan masses, who were determined to struggle for national independence and justice. Rumors of new oaths and new preparations for guerrilla war arose. British imperialism could not afford an endless series of such escalating rebellions. The revolution forced the dismantling of the old British colonial empire in East Afrika and the concession of independence. That this set the stage for the rise of the new neo-colonialisrn in no way lessened the heroic accomplishments of the young fighters who had sacrificed so freely. Most of all, the Kenya Revolution was not an end but a beginning, a foundation on which all succeeding Afrikan liberation movements have built.

The Use of "Pseudo-Gangs"

Operation Anvil was followed in December 1954 by Operation Hammer, a classic imperialist annihilation campaign to destroy the cut-off Land and Freedom Armies. The Aberdale forest was surrounded and bombed day and night, while a division of British troops searched through it in force. This big sweep was an admitted failure. Even in the thousands the Afrikan guerrillas easily filtered past the lines of